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ABSTRACT

Humanities courses have often been given little attention in continuing education for adults, possibly because they have been viewed as not "practical" or not "job-oriented" enough in our career-oriented, technologically advanced society. However, the humanities should be an integral part of our culture and of the lives of educated persons--a tenet that is becoming increasingly recognized by those conducting studies of our education system. The University of Cincinnati has started a model program to attract support for liberal arts courses and make the humanities more accessible to adult students. This program is set up to conduct courses in locations in the community, with course subjects structured around community or national events. For example, course offerings have included Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," given at Cincinnati Playhouse, and "Science Fiction," given at the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History's Science Fiction Festival. The fledgling program provides incentive awards of up to $750 for liberal arts faculty members to develop courses, along with stipends for teaching the courses. So far, the program has attracted 34 university teachers, ranking from instructor to full professor, and 9 are willing to repeat the experience. Plans are being made to expand the program with outside funding and to involve more faculty from the liberal arts area in teaching courses that will reach adult students in the community. (KC)

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HUMANITIES AND THE ADULT LEARNER IN AN INFORMATION SOCIETY

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How do we bring together traditional faculty and non-traditional students? That is a particularly germane question when the humanities are involved. To do so requires the development of new models that bring the humanities more into focus in adult education.

While there has been a rapid increase in continuing education programs and participants since the early 1970's, a small percentage of the activity has involved courses in the humanities. Leonard Oliver accurately describes the situation when he states,

> . . . adult and continuing education have been preoccupied with literacy and the acquiring of practical skills, job training, education for occupational mobility, effective use of leisure time, continuing professional education and similar offerings -- liberal studies have been peripheral to these central and more lucrative areas (1).

Oliver identifies several reasons for the lack of development of courses in the humanities, including the difficulty of courses in paying their own way, a perception of courses being soft and abstract and of little use in occupational/vocational training and a lack of commitment by humanities scholars themselves. The recent emphasis on high technology and the information revolution have only increased the preponderance of vocational courses over liberal studies. As a result, the humanities at the university are becoming increasingly unsure whether there really is a community audience for their disciplines.

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The difficulty in attracting audiences to traditional sorts of humanities offerings has been discouraging to humanities departments and teachers alike, who prefer to focus their efforts on existing pools of undergraduate majors.

On the other hand, two broad areas of potential students already well known to continuing education personnel are worthy of attention for those seeking to develop humanities programming. The first involves those students pursuing additional education related to career interests; the second those interested in personal enrichment. Efforts to develop programs in these areas have occurred on a piecemeal basis. While the major portion of this presentation will address a model developed in response to individuals seeking personal enrichment, a few comments on the relationship of the humanities to those who are pursuing career interests and/or degree programs are appropriate.

For several years now liberal arts majors and the role of the liberal arts in degree programs have both been on the decline. The period of time has been characterized by the out of work, Ph.D. taxi driver and the cafeteria approach to a well rounded education. But once again the liberal arts is being recognized as an important component in preparing individuals for employment.

In April of 1983 an international conference on the humanities and careers in business was sponsored jointly by the Association of American Colleges and the National Endowment for the Humanities (2). Among the conclusions reached were:

- faculty members should recognize that good teaching in the humanities is more than developing apprentice scholars. Courses should give attention to skills that include critical thinking, effective writing and speaking, analysis, research technique, knowledge of a foreign language and ethical and moral decision making;
- current employees would benefit from programs in the humanities and colleges should strengthen that component of the programs for adults;

- business should analyze entry level positions in functional terms rather than solely on the basis of major since studies demonstrate that individuals with broad backgrounds often make the most successful employees over the long run;
- employees should support continuing education at the workplace and tuition reimbursement should not be so narrowly defined as to exclude career development through studying the humanities.

Other recommendations addressed issues of career advising, curriculum development, internships and financial support.

Further evidence of the value of a humanities background comes from a study of AT&T employees progress, "Career Patterns: The Liberal Arts Major in Bell System Management" (3). The study, later supported by research at other organizations, indicated that humanities and social science majors who had superior administrative skills and strong motivation for advancement rose more rapidly in managerial ranks than did business and engineering majors. The former groups had stronger verbal abilities, were more self motivated and showed greater openness to change. Thus, it is clear that while technical skills continue to be important, the ability to write and speak clearly and to manage people are critically needed skills. Yet there is more to this than just the acquisition of skills. Steve Zwerling, Associate Dean of Continuing Education at New York University writes,

> Most of us would instructively reject such a suggestion because we somehow still believe that to be educated means something more than to be trained for work. Despite disagreement about educational philosophy and despite a preoccupation with megatrends, we remain at least vaguely aware that we are the inheritors of civilization and that our task is to preserve it, to enrich it, and to pass it on through study of the past and cultivation of our own powers of thought and responsible action (4).

In this context career becomes more than a job, it is what one does with one's life. These thoughts will be more in evidence during the next several months as reports on the quality of undergraduate education reflect the concerns voiced by William J. Bennett, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities that "the general sense of the group that the condition of learning in the humanities is not satisfactory" and of Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, that

> college students are not well informed about the world in which they live, that they are becoming more parochial at the very time the human agenda becomes more global and that they lack historical perspective and have little knowledge of the significant social trends that will consequently shape their lives (5).

The recently released report on "Excellence In Undergraduate Education" recommends two full years of liberal education which will extend undergraduate programs beyond four years in many cases (6). Such a recommendation could have a profound impact on those programs designed for adults seeking a degree. The challenge to continuing education is to provide a coherent humanities curriculum as opposed to hit and miss offerings, to develop courses that draw upon the experiences of adults and to provide bridges between skills and humanistic thought.

However the model we present today is one that addresses a program designed for those seeking personal enrichment rather than a degree. It calls for the humanities to be brought to already established audiences for humanities-oriented activities -- theatres, museums, the opera -- but whose interests have not yet taken academic form. Continuing Education in the humanities can bring scholarly and pedagogical expertise from the many humanities departments to these audiences, providing an academic content and structure to their avocational pursuits. By creating and supporting innovative programs

that bring together humanities-area faculty with segments of the community already interested enough in the humanities to attend a play, for example, or visit a museum, the University can reach out to make an initial contact with a new audience. Programs that are specifically designed to present a broad but scholarly humanities background to these audiences can enrich established but undeveloped interests in the humanities while whetting the appetite for further programs.

The model ultimately establishes an Institute for Continuing Education in the Humanities that can serve as a testing ground for courses and teaching methods that can be adopted into regular offerings. It presupposes that after some examples of demonstrated success in individual courses offered through the Institute, the humanities departments will be more interested in taking risks to design courses on their own with adult audiences specifically in mind. In the long run, this seems the most practical way of overcoming the traditional reticence of both the faculty and the adult audience, and of effecting long-term institutional change. As the humanities departments develop their own expertise and confidence in teaching the non-traditional learner, the Institute for Continuing Education in the Humanities can continue its role as innovator by continuing to develop new approaches to bringing the humanities to an adult audience.

We also recognize that a large urban university presents a somewhat formidable image to the adult. Its size and complexity can make finding one's way about on campus difficult for those who do not visit regularly. Its location near the center of the city raises questions of convenience and safety to many. One way to meet this hesitancy to attend the University is to reach out to other locations that are accessible, convenient and familiar. Another is to provide convenience of registration where all necessary procedures may be

accomplished at one place with a minimum of frustration. That opportunity is available through the Continuing Education Registration Center. As experience with the University and its programs increases, confidence will also and more contact is likely. We also recognize that not all individuals have a strong interest in the humanities at a given time in their lives or career patterns. These individuals can only be reached to a limited degree through advertising of courses or through delivery systems like newspapers or television. Thus, it is important to identify target groups with specific interests as a source of students to be attracted to Continuing Education. When faculty develop courses in cooperation with other cultural institutions in the community, it is possible to reach the individual in a place that is familiar and accessible. Exposure to the resources of the University can frequently lead to interests in other courses or programs.

In 1981, the Division of Continuing Education hired a part-time consultant in Arts & Sciences whose duties included assessing the interest on the part of the humanities disciplines in developing courses for the non-traditional learner. The consultant met individually with the chairperson of every department in the College of Arts and Sciences and discovered a broad but unfocused interest in subjects and formats associated with teaching and reaching today's continuing education student. Some departments were interested in developing telecourses, or courses that tied in with various existing PBS television series; others thought in terms of specific audiences, such as teaching foreign languages to travelers. Each chairperson could think of a project or two, but each expressed reluctance to commit the department's already thinly-stretched resources to yet one more program and as a consequence, no new programs were developed. Almost without exception, no department was hostile to continuing education, but none was ready to assign his or her most highly-motivated teachers to an apparently non-essential program with no guarantee of adequate enrollment. In a period of financial stringency, the departments are

naturally cautious about taking the risk to venture into areas where they lack prior experience and adequate support mechanisms.

Without further incentives, the individual teachers have been naturally reluctant to volunteer for new preparations and overloads. Finally, the departments seem to have found the largely bureaucratic labors of developing a new audience to be too forbidding.

Then, some two years ago, due to the interests of one of the authors, Jon Kamholtz, an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, and through his ability to get other faculty members in Arts and Sciences to participate, a number of innovative programs were developed. These programs used a variety of models for different audiences to bring new learning opportunities to non-traditional students. A number of programs have been directly associated with cultural events in the community. Examples include:

"Medea: The Play and Production" - Cincinnati Playhouse

"Science Fiction" - Cincinnati Museum of Natural History
"Science Fiction Festival."

"Teaching the Age of Chivalry" - Cincinnati Art Museum
"Treasures from the Tower of London."

"Contemporary American Fiction:"- University of Cincinnati
"Fourth Fiction Festival."

"Culture and Controversy Art From Today's Germany"
- Contemporary Arts Center
"Expressions: New Art From Germany".

"Shakespeare's Julius Caesar The Play and Production"
- Cincinnati Playhouse

"The World of Verdi" - Cincinnati Opera

"Culture and Controversy: Citizen/Artist" - Contemporary Arts Center
"Disarming Images."

"First Tuesday in November" - Presidential Election

Typically, the strategy for these programs has been characterized by the development of non-specialized courses with broad or multi-disciplinary humanities content being offered to specialized audiences. For example, the student enrolled in "Medea: The Play and the Production" was taught about the culture and literature of ancient Greece, the contemporary literary and sociological relevance of Medea as play and theme, and finally got a view into how live theatre tries to pull all these together.

That we have had some success in recruiting faculty can be seen from the following. In the past two and a half academic years we have taught 19 programs, 9 of which were for credit, and all of which were new. Many were interdisciplinary and involved multiple faculty members: in all 34 faculty from 4 colleges and 16 different departments. Nine were sufficiently pleased with the experience to do it more than once. A little more than half of the faculty were at the Associate Professor level, with the remainder divided about equally between Full Professor, Assistant Professor and the lower ranks such as instructor of adjunct.

In order to encourage more faculty to participate it is important to provide incentives. Faculty at the University of Cincinnati teach on the quarter system, and teaching loads in the humanities are heavy, commonly adding up to eight preparations per academic year. Departmental commitments -- often to more than one degree or certificate granting programs -- have first claim on time. Advancement and tenure are closely linked to publication rather than teaching. Stipends for teaching courses in Continuing Education are modest because they are financed on an overload basis. As a means of attracting traditional faculty to develop courses for adult audiences we have established Teaching Incentive Awards. Grants of up to 750 dollars are awarded on a competitive basis and may be used in a variety of ways to assist in course development. Its chief function is to provide an incentive for participating

faculty to set time aside from their already demanding schedules of teaching and publication within their own departments to do advance preparations for a continuing education course that will have to be taught on an overload basis.

Proposals are reviewed by a faculty committee appointed by the Dean of Continuing Education. The committee is chaired by a faculty member and includes the Director of Research and Development for Continuing Education and five additional faculty members from the humanities, in three different colleges. While cooperation with a community resource is not a requirement, it is encouraged.

Awards have been given for:

- "Contemporary American Fiction;"
- "Hemingway's Spain;"
- "Writing and Publishing Company Histories;"
- "The Art of Cincinnati;"
- "Cincinnati Theatre: A Critical Look at Drama and Production"

The first round of applications attracted only nine applications but they were almost entirely from faculty in the traditional liberal arts departments who had never taught in Continuing Education before. On the other hand some were clearly inappropriate sounding more like advanced graduate courses. The second round brought more applications and they were uniformly better. Nearly every one would have made a fine Continuing Educaiton course. But we also discovered that most of the applicants this time had experience with the non-traditional learner; their appointments were in the non-traditional colleges such as Evening College or the two year colleges. In short we were appealing to good faculty, but to faculty that did not need to be converted to Continuing Education. We were attracting and stimulating, but not educating. We are continuing our program of Teaching Incentive awards, but it may turn out that a substantial part of their usefulness is that they are a tool for us to use in monitoring our success in attracting our target faculty.

The initial use of the Teaching Incentive award coupled with the instructional stipend bring together financial incentives, prestige of awards and the opportunity to develop material for publication. For many faculty it is an opportunity to explore new areas of interest and a chance to work beyond narrow departmental borders. Eventually, recipients may feel encouraged to bring new ideas about their subjects and about pedagogy into the regular department curricula.

Where does this leave us at this time? We have made the first steps toward the establishment of a Humanities Institute for Continuing Education through hiring of a faculty member quarter-time to develop humanities programs and through the use of a faculty committee to provide direction and support. We have received seed money from the University to support Teaching Incentive Awards and have provided a series of successful credit/non-credit programs. We are seeking external funding to assist in further development to the Institute. We have brought together a targeted audience, faculty incentives, community co-sponsorship, faculty leadership and administrative assistance, key components of a model we believe addresses the question of greater involvement of the humanities in Continuing Education.

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